Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in this application.

Listing of Claims:

1-4.   (Canceled)

5.   (Currently Amended) <u>A method for encoding digital information, comprising the</u> <u>computer-implemented steps of:</u>

<u>capturing media program information to produce a media program file;</u>

<u>receiving an encoding request from a client, wherein the encoding request requests that</u> <u>the media program information be encoded in one or more encoding formats;</u>

<u>selecting a set of encoding engines that can encode the media program information in</u> <u>each of the one or more encoding formats;</u>

<u>sending the media program file to the selected set of encoding engines; and</u>

<u>using said selected set of encoding engines to encode said media program information in</u> <u>said one or more encoding formats;</u>

~~The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising using a distribution unit to perform the~~ ~~steps of:~~

identifying an encoding order as a pending job order that needs to be processed;

identifying one or more encoding units that are available to process the pending job order;

distributing the pending job order to the one or more encoding units;

receiving an encoded data file from each of the one or more encoding units; and

storing each of the encoded data files into a storage unit for subsequent delivery to one or

more customers.

6.   (Currently Amended) A method for encoding digital information, comprising the

computer-implemented steps of:

capturing media program information to produce a media program file;

receiving an encoding request from a client, wherein the encoding request requests that

the media program information be encoded in one or more encoding formats;

selecting a set of encoding engines that can encode the media program information in

each of the one or more encoding formats;

sending the media program file to the selected set of encoding engines; and

using the selected set of encoding engines to encode said media program information in

said one or more encoding formats,

wherein the step of capturing comprises the step of reading the media program

information from a storage medium;

the medium further includes the steps of associating the media program file with a unique

Master_ID,

wherein the step of receiving an encoding request from a client comprises the steps of:

causing a user interface to be displayed at the client, wherein the user interface allows

users to enter encoding requests; and

in response to a user interacting with said interface, receiving at a server an encoding

request, wherein the encoding request includes said unique Master_ID,

~~The method as recited in claim 3,~~ wherein the step of receiving at a server an encoding request

further includes the steps of:

generating an encoding order based on the encoding request;

determining a unique Job_ID, wherein the unique Job_ID is associated with the encoding

order; and

storing as a pending job order in an accessible storage unit, the encoding order and its

association with the unique Job_ID.

7.   (Currently Amended) A method for encoding digital information, comprising the

computer-implemented steps of:

capturing media program information to produce a media program file;

receiving an encoding request from a client, wherein the encoding request requests that

the media program information be encoded in one or more encoding formats;

selecting a set of encoding engines that can encode the media program information in

each of the one or more encoding formats;

sending the media program file to the selected set of encoding engines; and

using the selected set of encoding engines to encode said media program information in

said one or more encoding formats, ~~The method as recited in claim 1,~~ wherein:

the encoding request requests that the media program information be encoded in a

plurality of encoding formats;

the step of selecting a set of encoding engines includes the step of selecting a set of

encoding engines that can encode the media program information in the plurality of encoding

formats; and

the step of using said selected set of encoding engines includes the step of using said

selected set of encoding engines to encode said media program information in said plurality of

encoding formats in parallel.

8-11. (Canceled).

12.   (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium carrying one or more

sequences of instructions for encoding digital information, wherein execution of the one or more

sequences of instructions by one or more processors causes the one or more processors to

perform the steps of:

capturing media program information to produce a media program file;

receiving an encoding request from a client, wherein the encoding request requests that

the media program information be encoded in one or more encoding formats;

selecting a set of encoding engines that can encode the media program information in

each of the one or more encoding formats;

sending the media program file to the selected set of encoding engines; and

using said selected set of encoding engines to encode said media program information in

said one or more encoding formats,

~~The computer-readable medium as recited in claim 8, further comprising using~~ wherein a

distribution unit ~~to perform~~ performs the steps of:

identifying an encoding order as a pending job order that needs to be processed;

identifying one or more encoding units that are available to process the pending job

order;

distributing the pending job order to the one or more encoding units;

receiving an encoded data file from each of the one or more encoding units; and

storing each of the encoded data files into a storage unit for subsequent delivery to one or

more customers.

13.   (Currently Amended)) A computer-readable medium carrying one or more

sequences of instructions for encoding digital information, wherein execution of the one or more

sequences of instructions by one or more processors causes the one or more processors to

perform the steps of:

capturing media program information to produce a media program file;

receiving an encoding request from a client, wherein the encoding request requests that

the media program information be encoded in one or more encoding formats;

selecting a set of encoding engines that can encode the media program information in

each of the one or more encoding formats;

sending the media program file to the selected set of encoding engines; and

using said selected set of encoding engines to encode said media program information in said one or more encoding formats,

wherein: the step of capturing comprises the step of reading the media program information from a storage medium;

the computer-readable medium further comprising instructions for performing the steps of associating the media program file with a unique Master_ID,

wherein the step of receiving an encoding request from a client comprises the steps of:

causing a user interface to be displayed at the client, wherein the user interface allows users to enter encoding requests; and

in response to a user interacting with said interface, receiving at a server an encoding request, wherein the encoding request includes said unique Master_ID,

~~The computer-readable medium as recited in claim 10,~~ wherein the step of receiving at a server an encoding request further includes the steps of:

generating an encoding order based on the encoding request;

determining a unique Job_ID, wherein the unique Job_ID is associated with the encoding order; and

storing as a pending job order in an accessible storage unit, the encoding order and its association with the unique Job_ID.

14.   (Currently Amended)) <u>A computer-readable medium carrying one or more</u>

<u>sequences of instructions for encoding digital information, wherein execution of the one or more</u>

<u>sequences of instructions by one or more processors causes the one or more processors to</u>

<u>perform the steps of:</u>

<u>capturing media program information to produce a media program file;</u>

<u>receiving an encoding request from a client, wherein the encoding request requests that</u>

<u>the media program information be encoded in one or more encoding formats;</u>

<u>selecting a set of encoding engines that can encode the media program information in</u>

<u>each of the one or more encoding formats;</u>

<u>sending the media program file to the selected set of encoding engines; and</u>

<u>using said selected set of encoding engines to encode said media program information in</u>

<u>said one or more encoding formats,</u>

~~The computer-readable medium as recited in claim 8,~~ wherein:

the encoding request requests that the media program information be encoded in a

plurality of encoding formats;

the step of selecting a set of encoding engines includes the step of selecting a set of

encoding engines that can encode the media program information in the plurality of encoding

formats; and

the step of using said selected set of encoding engines includes the step of using said

selected set of encoding engines to encode said media program information in said plurality of

encoding formats in parallel.

15.   (Original) A system for encoding digital information, the system comprising;

a capturing unit that is capable of capturing media program information from a storage medium;

a storage unit that maintains captured media program information, program metadata that is based on the media program information, and encoding request information, wherein each encoding request identifies a set of one or more encoding formats that are to be sued to encode a particular media program;

a server connected to said storage unit, wherein the server is configured to receive encoding requests from clients that are connected to said server and to generate and store pending encoding orders in said storage unit based on said encoding requests;

a distribution unit that is configured to retrieve pending job orders from said storage unit and to distribute the orders to one or more encoding units;

wherein the encoding units are configured to encode in parallel job orders that request a specific media program to be encoded in multiple encoding formats.

16.   (New) The system claim 15, wherein the distribution unit performs the steps of:

identifying an encoding order as a pending job order that needs to be processed;

identifying one or more encoding units that are available to process the pending job order;

distributing the pending job order to the one or more encoding units;

receiving an encoded data file from each of the one or more encoding units; and

storing each of the encoded data files into a storage unit for subsequent delivery to one or

more customers.